

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ERDA-05 ERDE-00 AID-05 JUSE-00

NEAE-00 NSF-01 IO-11 ACDA-05 EB-07 NRC-05 OES-03

FEA-01 /094 W

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O 151305Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4674

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 3901

FOLLOWING REPEAT BOMBAY 0659 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI

15 MAR 76.

QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOMBAY 0659

E.O. 11652 NA

TAGS: TECH ENRG IN

SUBJ: PRESS EDITORIAL ON TARAPUR SAFETY

1. EDITORIAL PAGE OF BOMBAY EDITION OF MARCH 15 ISSUE OF TIMES OF INDIA FEATURES A LONG 3-COLUMN PIECE BY ASSISTANT EDITOR K.C. KHANNA ON TARAPUR'S SAFETY RECORD. STORY OPENS WITH ACCOUNT OF CRITICISM OF TARAPUR RECENTLY RECOUNTED BEFORE SENATOR CRANSTON'S COMMITTEE. KHANNA QUICKLY NOTES THAT THIS CRITICISM IS BEING EXPLOITED BY ELEMENTS IN US OPPOSED TO NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION. HE ADDS THAT 54 MEMBERS OF US CONGRESS HAVE ALREADY ADVISED NRC TO DELAY THE EXPORT OF URANIUM TO TAPS BECAUSE IT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO MAKE 54 HIROSHIMA-SIZE BOMBS.

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2. KHANNA CHARACTERIZES ALL THIS AS NONSENSE, NOTES SECRETARY KISSINGER'S ENDORSEMENT OF CONTINUED SHIPMENTS OF NUCLEAR FUEL AND PROCEEDS TO POINT-BY-POINT DEFENSE OF TARAPUR'S SAFETY RECORD AND REFUTATION OF CRITICISM. HE ENDS UP BY SAYING, "FAR FROM BEING A "PRIME CANDIDATE FOR A NUCLEAR DISASTER", AS MOTHER JONES CLAIMS, TAPS HAS OVER THE YEARS NOT EMITTED ENOUGH RADIATION TO INJURE EVEN A DOG, MUCH LESS INTERFERE IN ANY WAY WITH THE UNRESTRICTED UTILISATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ANYWHERE

3. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST DETAILED DISCUSSION OF SPATE OF CRITICISM IN US OF TARAPUR SAFETY RECORD AND RELATED PUBLIC INTERVENTION SEEKING A DELAY IN ISSUANCE OF LICENSES FOR FUEL FOR TARAPUR, ITS PUBLICATION SUGGESTS THAT GOI HAS DECIDED TO LET ITS SIDE OF THIS STORY OUT, EVEN THOUGH CHAIRMAN SETHNA HAS STRONGLY URGED THAT WHOLE MATTER BE KEPT BOTTLED UP UNTIL NRC HAS HAD CHANCE TO SPEAK ON LICENSE ISSUE. AS CONGEN HAS REPORTED, SETHNA BELIEVES THAT ANY PUBLICITY WILL BE EXPLOITED TO HIS AND OUR DISADVANTAGE UNTIL THERE IS SOME PROGRESS ON MATTER OF LICENSE ISSUE. ON OTHER HAND, J.C.SHAH, SETHNA'S ASSISTANT WHO ACTUALLY DIRECTS TARAPUR PROJECT, HAS TAKEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK PUBLICLY IN DEFENSE OF HIS OPERATION. THERE CLEARLY IS DISAGREEMENT WITHIN HZAEC ON BEST TACTICS FOR HANDLING THIS MATTER WITH THE BFDIAN PUBLIC. K.C.KHANNA, WHOM I KNOW ELL, APPROACHED NH ON SATURDAY TO VERIFY ACTUAL DETAILS OF HIS STORY THAT RELATE TO THE US. I TOLD HIM HIS FACTS SEEM STRAIGHT BUT THAT I WAS IN NO POSITION TO COMMENT ON WHETHER USAEC OFFICIALS HAD VISITED OR HAD NOT VISITED HERE TWO OR THREE YEARS BEFORE MY ARRIVAL. HE INDICATED IAEC OFFICIALS WERE SOURCE OF HIS MATERIAL AND I TOLD HIM I KNEW OF NO ONE HERE MORE QUALIFIED TO GIVE ACCURATE INFORMATION. HOWEVER, BEING AWARE OF SETHNA'S OPPOSITION TO PUBLICITY I WAS CAREFUL TO AVOID ADDING ANYTHING TO HIS FACTUAL BASE AND SIMPLY REFERRED HIM BACK TO IAEC FOR EXPANSION OF DETAILS HE SOUGHT.

COURTNEY

UNQUOTE.
SCHNEIDER

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